



# **Gator Times**

## **USS NASSAU (LHA 4)**

October 2006

Vol. 7, No. 12

## **The Navy's Latest Addition**



USN Photo by MC3 Alexander Cooper.

Twelve USS Nassau Sailors were selected to become members of the chief petty officers community. AMC(AW/SW) Ervin Byrd (right) prepares to exchange hand salutes with newly pinned ATC(AW/SW) Donald Lee.

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*Nassau's CMC reminds us to prepare now for future deployments, and to update our calendars.*

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*Nassau Sailors join years of history and tradition when they transition from one rank to the next.*

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*Richmond Navy League Council adopts USS Nassau Sailors and their families.*

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#### **We Remember!**

*AO3 Jorge D. Kaltakis, Nassau's Weapons Dept.*

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# Although We're Home - The Work Continues

**By CMDCM(SW/AW) R. Makowski**

Hello again to the Sailors and families of the USS Nassau. It's been a while since I have written an article for the Gator Times, so I will do my very best to get everyone updated on the events of the past summer.

As most of you know, the end of the deployment didn't mean we could return home and take a break. We came home and began a very extensive certification period, followed by two port visits: Port Canaveral, Fla., and Earle, N.J.

Your Nassau Sailors completed a comprehensive ships inspection called INSURV. The inspection basically looked at every system and every aspect of Nassau. It was a thorough ship

inspection that required hours and hours of hard work from the entire crew.

We are now in the BAE Shipyard in Norfolk, where they are completing several upgrades to our electronics suite, modifications which will allow us to repair and maintain the Marine Corps newest aircraft, the V-22 OSPREY. Major alterations have also been made to our medical facilities, which will increase survivability in the event of a chemical, biological or radiological attack. There are many more repairs or upgrades going on at the same time, and all of this has kept the crew pretty busy. The shipyard period is also allowing the crew to attend many much needed schools, which keeps our them on the cutting edge of technology and leadership skills.

Due to the fact that many systems onboard Nassau have been secured until completion of our shipyard period, we have shifted the working hours. Hopefully, this will allow most of our Sailors to have more time at home with their families. Please enjoy this time, once we depart the shipyard, the crew will have several more certifications to complete prior to being certified to complete our assigned missions. Now is the time to prepare for our next deployment or surge. We must prepare ourselves and families so that we can deploy any where in the world on short notice. I challenge all Nassau Sailors to prepare yourselves and families now, don't wait.

I would also like to let everyone know of some upcoming events for the crew and families, if you haven't already marked them on your calendar, please do so.

On Dec. 2, Nassau's First Class Association will host the Children's Christmas Party. While the location and time has not been determined at this time, more information will follow. We also have a date for our command Christmas Party, 6 p.m., on Dec. 8 at the Portsmouth Renaissance Hotel. Don't forget to mark that on you calendars for that.



USN photos by MCSN Amanda Clayton.

**MMFN Nerlin Moncoeur depressurizes the deckedge elevator for wire replacement in the deck-edge elevator machine room.**

The USS Nassau's Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) department has done a great job ensuring that Sailors and family members will have a great time. I look forward to seeing you all at both events.

Pretty soon we will be putting out the dates for the holiday standdown periods. I would like to remind everyone that when purchasing tickets to fly home for the holidays, **do not purchase non-refundable tickets.** Every crewmember and family member needs to know that our schedule can change in a moments notice, being smart and purchasing refundable tickets can save you a lot of money.

As I close out this issue, I would like to thank those of you who have continued to work so diligently behind the scenes to support our Sailors, the Command Ombudsman and Family Support Group have done a wonderful job.

For the crew, please continue to double your efforts to concentrate on the job at hand, pay attention and complete the job the right way the first time. Remember you are a Sailor 24 hrs a day, and your actions on and off Nassau must be impeccable at all times. Until next time, take care and God Bless.

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# Expectant Moments

By Chaplain Karl A. Lindblad

**A** petty officer moved slowly off the pier struggling under a small load. She's going to meet with her friend at a local coffee shop. Let's listen in on the conversation.

**Petty Officer:** Oh, my feet, my hair, I just feel miserable.

**Friend:** Well how long has it been?

**Petty Officer:** About eight weeks so far. I think I'm getting light sensitive, I'm short tempered, I'm not really permitted to smoke and I'm just dying to find some of my favorite foods.

**Friend:** So is this your first?

**Petty Officer:** No, my second. My friends all say that once you've gone through it, it gets easier; but that's not true. I keep waking up at night, not enough sleep, my clothes don't fit right, I'm sweaty and always carrying extra weight up the steps is tough. Simple stuff like going to the head and using the shower is a big ordeal.

**Friend:** When are you due?

**Petty Officer:** I believe sometime in December.

**Friend:** Really, so soon? You don't even show. I thought these things take nine months.

**Petty Officer:** Hey, I'm not pregnant, we're talking about the YARDS!!!

Ah, the yards. Getting up at odd hours, all kinds of noise, taking your laundry load off ship, people invading your space, no A/C, no hot water, relocations and feeling like we've lost control.

Whether we are repairing a ship or our lives, it often hurts just to open up the problem. Too many times we feel we can go it alone, or maybe the problem will just go away by itself.

I'm looking at our medical decks right now, or what's left of them. Tell you one thing, there are no band aids on the bulkheads, these walls do not self heal. Rather I see people with needle guns, grinders and welding torches busy at work cutting, modifying and repairing.

Our command encourages us to use this time not only to fix the ship, but also to advance our professional and personal lives. Lots of training, class time, hopefully some family time

## Chaplain's Corner



is afforded to us now. We have the opportunity, but are we taking advantage of it? We actually have to take time to TALK with our spouse. No pulling away from the pier and forgetting our home problems. Truth is most things in life do not self heal or heal well without our managing the proper solutions.

Do you have a 'shore side' event that needs attention? Don't go at it alone without asking for advice. We all have to wear hard hats in the yards, so why not take good safety measure and speak with leadership on the many options available to work out the financial, education, leisure and personal issues that go with our home life.

Yes, we will one day exit the yards (even if it feels like giving birth), but our families remain with us forever. Take advantage of what MWR has to offer and maybe even stop by the Chaplains' office to share your hopes and dreams. Oh and watch your head, those drooping cables can catch you unawares!

## Nassau Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

Aura Robinson and her grand daughter, Daphne perform Panamanian dances in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month for Nassau Sailors Oct. 12. Sailors were also able to feast upon Hispanic food, catered by Nassau's Supply Department.

Aura has been Director of the Panamanian Floklore Group of Hampton Roads since 1994. The group originally started to teach Daphne her heritage and traditional customs, and her and Aura also travel as far away as Washington, D.C. and all over Florida to help people enjoy and understand their culture.



USN Photo by MC2(AW) Susan Milton

# Nassau Sailors Join the Ranks of Over 100 Years of Naval Tradition

By MC3 Andrew King

On Sept. 15, 2006, onboard the battleship USS Wisconsin, Norfolk, Va., CAPT John Roberti, Sailors, families and friends witnessed the pinning ceremony of the gold fowled anchor and super imposed silver USN, signifying that 12 USS Nassau Sailor were now chief petty officers.

"I really enjoyed the ceremony because I could see a big difference in all of us," said Nassau's Deck Department's, BMC(SW/AW) James Gamble. "It was an honor to be a part of this kind of ceremony with all the history and tradition involved, I can not think of any other ceremony in the military like the pinning ceremony," he said.

The rank of chief petty officer was first established April 1, 1893 and is a rank that is unique to the Navy. The duties and responsibilities that are given to a chief help the Navy to run efficiently.

As the newly advanced chiefs take the reigns of leadership they serve a unique role as both technical experts and leaders. While serving to train junior officers and enlisted alike they help to shape the future generations of leadership within the Navy.



**ABOVE:** After receiving the golden anchors, SHCS(SW/AW) Henri McCrae places USS Nassau's Sailor of the Year, ICC(SW/AW) Sollie Davis' cover on his head signifying his complete chief petty officer uniform. **BELOW:** CTRC(SW/AW) Gregory Andreoli is piped ashore after being pinned.

According to Nassau's Command Master Chief, Richard Makowski the transition phase from first class petty officer to chief petty officer is a period

of training. "The biggest thing is to teach them their new responsibilities before putting on the khaki uniform," said Makowski about the transition phase. "We try to get them to work together as a [chief's] mess to solve problems."

"I was kind of confused at first because it was not what I had heard about, compared to the old traditional way of doing it," said Gamble about the new transition phase. "I enjoyed meeting the new chiefs and bonding with the people that went through transition with me. They are my first line of networking," he said.

While the Navy's name for the advancement from first class petty officer to chief petty officer has changed to become known as the transition phase, according to Nassau's Morale Welfare and Recreation LCPO, ABCM(AW/SW)







**ABOVE:** Singing “Anchors Aweigh,” to start the pinning ceremony immediately captured the attention of family members and friends. **BELOW:** USS Nassau’s Commanding Officer, CAPT John Roberti congratulates BMC(SW/AW) James Gamble on his selection to the rank of chief petty officer.



Amos Harvey one tradition will never change.

“The tradition of knowing that chiefs are the backbone of the Navy, will never change,” said Harvey. “They are the chief now. A lot of things are going to change and they are going to get asked a lot of questions. Through the designated training time they received, they received a lot of knowledge. One of the things we tried to teach them was humility, because at some point during their naval career, they will need to be humble.”

*USN Photos by  
MC3 Alexanders Cooper*

# Richmond Council Adopts Top Gator



Richmond Navy League liason council members Dave Vachet and Joe Moshetti present a 42-inch plasma television to Nassau Sailors during the ship adoption ceremony. The Top Gator was the fourth ship in the Hampton Roads area to be adopted.



Richmond Council Navy League of the United States President Roy Martin presents a plaque to USS Nassau's Commanding Officer, CAPT John Roberti, making the Top Gator's adoption official.

## Story & Photos by MC2(AW) Susan Milton

Sailors recently gathered to witness the Richmond Navy League liason council adopt the USS Nassau in a small, yet meaningful ceremony on the mess decks. The ceremony included a speech by Richmond Navy League president Roy Martin.

"Our main goal is to help military personnel and their families in time of need, and we are happy to be here to adopt your ship," said Martin. According to Martin, the significance of "adopting ships" is to improve quality of life for military members and their dependents through programs such as the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) program.

"We provide NJROTC students with \$500 scholarships and invite youths for day cruises on various ships, and teach them naval history," said Martin.

"I am very pleased the Richmond Navy League adopted us," said Nassau Commanding Officer, CAPT John Roberti. "This benefits the crew in so many ways, but it is about what they do and not the size of the gift. We certainly appreciate how they help our quality of life."



# Gator In The Spotlight

## Airman Bryon Allen

**Navy experience:** 1 year

**Time onboard:** 8 months

**Hometown:** Youngstown, Ohio

### **What made you decide to join the Navy?**

I guess like a lot of other people, I joined the Navy because I wanted to get an education and travel as much as I could. Another motivation for me was the steady paycheck and other benefits the Navy offered.

### **What do you do in your spare time? Hobbies?**

I actually record my own music here in Virginia. I'm mostly into R and B and I write and produce all the music on my own.

### **What has been your most memorable moment since you joined the Navy?**

Flying onto Nassau while it was on deployment overseas was obviously something I had never experienced before in my life. On the way to the ship I also got to spend a little time in Amsterdam as well.

### **What was the biggest surprise for you in boot camp?**

Boot camp wasn't really that big of a surprise to me to be honest. I kind of knew what I was getting myself into before hand. I guess the biggest surprise for me in boot camp was when I received honor graduate of my division. I was also the R-POC of the division too.

### **What do you like most about being in the Navy?**

I think the best thing about being in the Navy for me is definitely all the people I have gotten the chance to meet. I also really like the

fact that I have a steady job with a steady paycheck and I have gotten the chance to do see some of the world too.

### **What are your goals for your career in the Navy?**

First off I definitely want to be a dual-qualified Airman. So far the Navy is treating me pretty good and as of right now I can even see myself sticking this out for the next twenty years.

### **Who is your role model, and why?**

My mother is my biggest role model for sure. She has always been the one that has pushed me the hardest and has been my main motivation. I don't think I would be where I am at today without her.

### **What advice would you give to other junior Sailors on the Nassau?**

I would just say that like anything, the navy is what you make of it. If you have a bad attitude, most likely you won't enjoy it. If you stay positive and try to keep a good attitude, life will be a lot easier for you.



*USN photo by MC3 Arif Patani*

**Airman Allen says the best thing about being in the Navy is all the different people he has gotten a chance to meet.**

*In Memory of*  
**AO3 Jorge D. Kaltakis, USN**  
*July 21, 1984 - Oct. 6, 2006*  
**USS NASSAU WEAPONS DEPARTMENT**  
*Dec. 2003 - Oct. 2006*  
*Sailor, Shipmate, Friend*



Petty Officer Kaltakis was born on July 21, 1984 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He enlisted in the Navy on May 19, 2003. During October 2003, AO3 Kaltakis reported to the USS Nassau where he was assigned to the Weapon's Department, G-3 Bomb Assembly Division.

While onboard Nassau, Kaltakis was a key member in providing for the ship's self-defense while deployed in support of Operation New Horizons, off the coast of Haiti, and CENTCOM Deployment 05-06/Operation Iraqi Freedom.

He helped lead the Weapons Department through two major Weapons onloads and offloads, a six month CENTCOM deployment, and the first Joint Shipboard Weapons and Ordance (JSWORD) Operation with the U.S. Army.

May we remember the smiles you brought to our faces and the good times that we shared. Rest in peace Dodge. We will miss you.

***Your Shipmates,  
 USS Nassau Weapons Department***

## Bravo Zulu

### Senior Sailor of the Quarter

CTM1(SW/AW/SS) Marcus Kohlmann

### Sailor of the Quarter

FC2(SW/AW) Marlon Glass

### Junior Sailor of the Quarter

CS3(SW/AW) Ramil Quiroz

### Blue Jacket of the Quarter

YNSN Alan Taylor  
 AZAN Erica Ostrom  
 AN Earvin Lopez  
 SA Tarra Thomas

MMFN Chad Brumit

CTRSN Jared Marks

SN Libby Celleri

SHSN Donald Earnest

AA Christopher Sutton

ITSN(SW/AW) Truong Mai



### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal

IT1 Dewann Stegall

CS2 Emmett Bolton

YN2 Cynthia Flessert

SK2 Kelsey Sayson

PS3 Michael Hofmeister

### Letter of Commendation

ET3 Paraskeve Hioutakos



### Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist

QM2 Perry Douglas

SH3 Clairmonte Liverpool